

Rector's Circle



Concordia
UNIVERSITY

Vol. 6, No. 2
June 1993

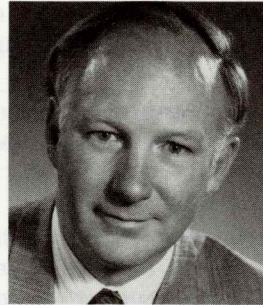
Dear Friend of the University,
In the past I have used my message in this newsletter to highlight our hard work, as staff, students and faculty members, and our quest for excellence in our chosen fields. This time I would like to say a few words about recognition of that excellence and the success of members of the University, whether it be in research, student competition, social contribution or some other form of endeavour.

In addition to impressive awards to members of the University, such as the Killam Fellowship granted to Dr. Elaine Newman and the Outstanding Delegation Award earned by our Model United Nations team in Boston, described in this newsletter, a number of other superior efforts have been recognised this year.

Often individuals make efforts across a wide range of social, academic, political and economic activities and there is not a single place where this can be acknowledged. That is why we take special pride in honours which do recognise overall contributions, such as the naming of Corinne Jetté of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science to the Order of Canada.

Four Concordia Chemistry and Physics students were granted Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada Centennial scholarships worth a total of \$85,200. These prestigious awards are given to fifty-five of our nation's most promising students each year to assist them in graduate studies and research leading to a doctoral degree. That students from this University received such a large proportion of these awards is a tribute to the quality of our students, their teachers and the learning environment provided by this University.

In a previous edition of this newsletter I mentioned the Seagram Fund for Academic Innovation and its grant of seed money to support native education at the University. Subsequent to this, we submitted a proposal to the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la science of Québec



to ensure longer-term operational funding for this project. In less than two months, the government agreed to provide a three-year, \$200,000 grant for this purpose. The support for Concordia's Native Student Centre is

recognition of the diligence and hard work done by members of the Concordia Council on First Nations Education and also a reflection of how the University's mission is in keeping with the priorities of Québec society.

The acknowledgments of these efforts on the part of members of the Concordia family are important for several reasons. The monies associated with some of these awards are important in allowing students and professors to continue their work with some assurance of security. Perhaps more importantly, the recognition of our peers and colleagues reinforces the pride we take in our work and helps to motivate us to continue reaching for the best.

A word of respect from a peer will always go a long way to establishing a positive environment where all can work together to move this University forward and contribute to the society to which we belong. It will also help us to understand what a superb university this is and what excellent people work with us.

Patrick Kenniff
Rector and Vice-Chancellor

Newman wins Killam Fellowship

by Barbara Black



"**E**lated" is the way Biology Professor Elaine Newman describes her state of mind when she learned that she had hit the Canadian research jackpot. The Killam Research Fellowships, administered by the Canada Council, provide salary and fringe benefits of at least \$60,000 a year for two years. For a scientist like Newman, itching to devote herself without distraction to her work, it's like winning a lottery.

Interviewed in her laboratory in the Henry F. Hall Building, Newman was still glowing with the prospect.

"Two years of research, nothing else. I'll think, talk to people, take courses and visit other labs. No committees, no teaching — not that I won't be glad to get back to teaching afterwards."

Newman began as a microbial physiologist, then moved into genetics, and then into molecular biology. She has been working on her chosen specialty of leucine research since 1970, when it was an obscure corner of microbiology.

Leucine is an amino acid, and she studies the way it affects the breakdown of serine, another amino acid which is present in *Escherichia coli* bacteria. The *E. coli* bacterium is related to salmonella.

Leucine research is now "the fastest-moving field there is," and Newman takes satisfaction from the knowledge that she is largely responsible.

She and then doctoral student Rongtuan Lin achieved a scientific breakthrough in leucine research in 1991, and now it is time to capitalize on that leap forward with some highly concentrated work.

Rose Sheinin, Vice-Rector, Academic, is a biologist, and a good friend of Newman.

"She chose a very challenging problem, and stuck to it," Sheinin said. "Others might go where the money is, but she spent many years on this work, and it did break. I think it's wonderful to recognize that kind of commitment."

Pure research

The implications of her research could be widely felt, Sheinin said. We all have the *E. coli* in our bodies. Salmonella is a bacterial infection which is found in a wide variety of plant and animal matter, and can have devastating effects, particularly in very poor countries. Improving our knowledge of bacteria makes it possible to imagine using them, to develop large amounts of protein for areas where food is scarce, for example, or to use bacteria to consume unwanted substances.

However, Newman deliberately avoids linking her work with its immediate applications, and actively pursues the ideal of pure research and intellectual inquiry. She founded Concordia's Science College in



Photo : Jonas Papauretis

1979 to build a community of scientists at the University. An exchange trip to China in 1989 continues to bear fruit in scientific contacts.

Dr. Tien Bui, Associate Vice-Rector, Academic (Research) congratulated Newman on her achievement. "She deserved it. And winning such an award helps Concordia be recognized as a research centre as well as a teaching university."

Canada's Guggenheim

The Killam is Canada's most prestigious research fellowship, comparable to the Guggenheim in the United States, but for two years instead of one.

Fourteen Killam Research Fellowships were awarded this year by the Canada Council. They are worth up to \$55,000 a year in salary for up to two years, plus fringe benefits amounting to about \$5,000 a year.

Izaak Walton Killam was born in modest circumstances in 1885 in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and went to work in a Halifax bank when he was 18. He became a protégé of Max Aitken, later Lord Beaverbrook, and replaced him at the helm of Royal Securities, an influential investment house. He lived for many years in Montréal, and died in 1955, leaving his substantial estate to his wife Dorothy, who vastly increased it through her own expert investment and established the Killam Programme in her will.

Professor Elaine Newman is Concordia's third Killam recipient. The previous recipients were both from the Religion Department: Charles Davis, who held it from 1981 to 1983, and Michel Despland, who held it from 1990 to 1992.

Concordia takes team award for Outstanding Delegation at Harvard

'Model' students win!

by Barbara Black



They've done it again.

The Concordia Model United Nations Club, uncoached and uncredited, has once again taken the Outstanding Delegation award at Harvard's annual UN simulation, held in Boston in late February. Members also won 11 individual awards for their committee work.

Unlike many of the 145 university and college teams competing in the three-day event, the Concordia contingent is completely student-run, and entirely extra-curricular. Participants say this may even give them an edge, since they must be intrinsically motivated by the sheer challenge of debating on behalf of a country they have had only weeks, or even days, to research.

Candice Alderson, who organized the trip, says that participation involves "about as much work as an extra course."

"But it's fun, especially if you've been more than once and you see a few of the same people again."

Alderson, who is in the fourth year of a double major (Political Science and Geography), notices other benefits to taking part. "It looks good on an application form. And you feel more confident talking in front of people."

This year, the 35 Concordia students were assigned

to represent Iran and Paraguay. Dina Koutouki said Paraguay had a low profile — until there was a sudden announcement that the South American country had undergone a (fictitious) military coup. That livened up debate considerably.

The club prepared for the event by meeting once a week with resource people, such as a debating coach and an expert on Iran. They scrambled for research, and "professors were more than eager to help," Alderson said.

Concordia was chosen, along with Queen's University, to represent Canada at Harvard's international UN simulation in Prague, capital of the Czech Republic.

That left only three weeks to raise \$14,000 for travel, hotel and registration expenses for 11 team members. But the club has been through it all before. They represented Canada last year at the first international mock UN, held in a Polish seaside town. They won the top award at that one, too.

Concordia's individual prize-winners at the "national" (United States and Canada) simulation held in Boston were: Subuhi Abidi, Candice Alderson, Jean Canan, Dina Koutouki, Ken McMillan, Kristine Osgoode, Mouli Ramani, Saad Rahman, Annick Robinson, Sheldon Schnaar and David Wills.



No, this is not a Toyota commercial! The 23 members of Concordia's Model UN team are flying high after returning from Harvard with the Outstanding Delegation prize.

Photo: Jonas Paparellis

Corinne Jetté joins the Order of Canada

by Barbara Black

Professor Corinne Mount Pleasant-Jetté of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science can date the birth of her activism quite precisely.

"I was in a Grade 10 classroom at Father MacDonald High, and I'd only been in the school for two weeks. The history teacher said, 'Of course, Indians are second-class citizens. . . ' — and I flew into a rage."

Jetté has been a lecturer in technical writing in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science for 13 years. That's her day job. But her research and advocacy in race issues has steadily grown and deepened. Today, she is carefully listened to by the people who run this country, and in gratitude, they are awarding her the Order of Canada.

She is the third person associated with Concordia to become a member of the Order; the others are organist Bernard Lagacé and painter Yves Gaucher.

Jetté is not only delighted with the honour, but pleased because it is an acknowledgment at the highest level of the issues for which she has fought so hard.

Although brought up in Montréal, she was born on Canada's largest reserve, the Six Nations, at Brantford, Ont. Her people, the Tuscaroras, were the smallest and last of the nations to join the Iroquois confederacy.

She takes a strong interest in the community of native students at Concordia, particularly those who enroll in her Faculty, and in support organizations like the Concordia Council for First Nations Education. Her own professional specialty is an ideal tool, since many native students express the need for better writing skills.

"It's extremely frustrating to see natives come here to study, and then leave," she said. "And it makes me angry when students leave university for reasons not of their own making, such as feeling excluded or misunderstood."

Inappropriate course content

Sometimes course content is culturally inappropriate for them (for example, it may lean heavily on soul-baring discussion). Or native students may struggle with their studies in isolation, unaccustomed to approaching other students to form study networks.

She applauded new orientation programmes in place at several universities



Photo : Jonas Papaurelis

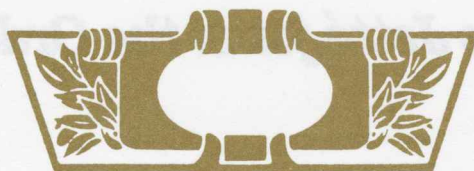
in western Canada to help native students approach engineering studies.

Jetté triumphantly cites statistics to illustrate native students' giant strides: "In 1951, there were 27 Indians in Canadian universities. In 1993, there are 25,000."

"This is a crucial period. The native population is the youngest in Canada — 65 per cent are under 25 years old — and education has to catch up."

For many years, Jetté has been a public educator in race relations. Since she lives and works in an urban milieu, that makes her an advocate not only for aboriginal people, but for minorities from all over the world, in matters such as police relations and employment equity.

Jetté is also involved in the proposed Chair in Intercultural, Ethnic and Race Relations Studies, a joint initiative of Concordia and the Université du Québec à Montréal, which was awarded a start-up grant in 1991 of \$400,000 by the federal Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship.



Rector's Circle Membership

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David & Stephanie Azrieli
Lawrence & Fran Bloomberg
Michael A.S. Boxer
William E. Bradford
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Murray Couture
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J. Michael Little
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Brian & Ellen Steck
Jessie Stewart
Claude I. Taylor
Stanley Tucker

Rector's Circle Dinner



Photo : Jonas Papaurelis

Dr. Patrick Kenniff, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Concordia University, welcomed Charter and Annual Members to the annual black tie dinner of the Rector's Circle, held at the University Club. The guests (front row, left to right) Ruth Glenen and Christina Groome: (back row, left to right) Rector Patrick Kenniff, Liette Lacroix, J. Brian Aune, Governor and Reginald K. Groome, Chairman of the Board of Governors.

Message of hope from Gloria Steinem

Founder of Ms. Magazine and considered one of the 25 most influential women for nine consecutive years, Gloria Steinem spoke to more than 700 people at Concordia on International Women's Day. Organized jointly by Concordia's Simone de Beauvoir Institute and Coles Books, the event raised more than \$3,000 for two Montréal-area women's shelters.

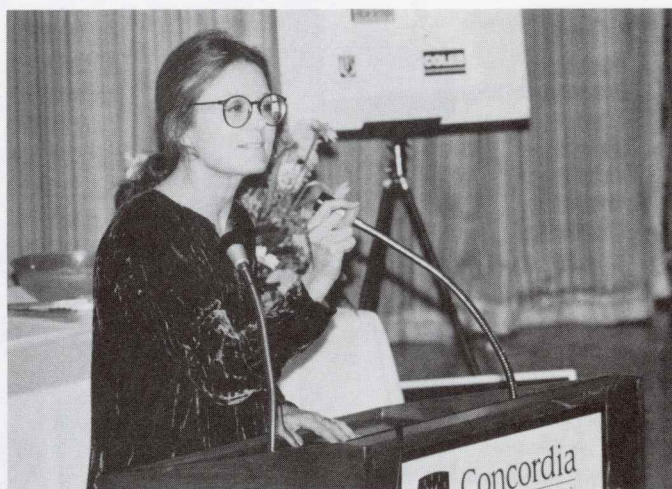


Photo : Jonas Papaurelis

The Rector's Circle Newsletter serves the membership of the Rector's Circle at Concordia University. It is edited bi-annually by Hugh W. Brodie of the Office of the Rector, Laurie Zack of the Public Relations Office, and Carole Kleingrib, Office of University Advancement, who may be contacted at 514/848-4845 and 848-4856.

Comments and suggestions are welcome.

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